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ABSTRACT

This study compared home-schooled children to conventionally schooled children in West Virginia. A total of 30 home schooling families and 32 conventionally schooling families with children of 7 to 14 years of age participated in the study. The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition was used to gather parent perspectives on the social sufficiency of their children. The children's self-evaluations were recorded on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. A projective instrument, the Kinetic Drawing System for Family and School, was used to explore child-family-school interaction patterns for evidence of emotional indicators. Results showed no statistical difference between home-schooled and conventionally schooled children in terms of social sufficiency, self-concept, or presence of emotional indicators. A reference list of 45 items is included. (MM)

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL STATUS OF HOME SCHOOLED CHILDREN AND CONVENTIONALLY SCHOOLED CHILDREN IN WEST VIRGINIA

BY

LEE STOUGH

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Because the interactional influences in a home school are quite different from those in a conventional school many people are concerned about the social and emotional status of the relatively isolated home educated child. This research followed a quasi-experimental cohort design and involved 30 home schooling families and 32 conventionally schooling families with children ages 7 to 14 from across the state. The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition was used to gather parent perspectives on the social sufficiency of their children. The children's self-evaluations were recorded on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. A projective instrument, the Kinetic Drawing System for Family and School, was used to explore child - family - school interaction patterns for evidence of emotional indicators. Results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the home schooled versus the conventionally schooled sample in terms of social sufficiency, self-concept, or presence of emotional indicators. Home education does not adversely influence a child's affective development and may contribute to such development.

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Preface

Both parents and the state have been involved in the educational process. Historically, parents directed their children's education (Pitman, 1987; Whitehead & Bird, 1984; Carrere, 1983). Then with the rise of compulsory education statutes, states made their presence felt in developing this area. "Compulsory education statutes were enacted primarily to promote equality of attitude and experience, thus advancing social uniformity and cohesion" (Buchannon, 1987, p.341). Throughout history the interest of the state to standardize the educational experience has often conflicted with the right of parents to control the upbringing of their children and to freely choose the method in which their children will be educated. "Ever since the beginning of universal compulsory schooling, a number of parents, because of geographical isolation or personal conviction, have always chosen to teach their own children" (Holt, 1983, p.391).

Today, there is a resurgence of interest in home schooling. Lines (1986) estimates there may be 120,000 to 260,000 children being educated by parents in homes across the United States. Other estimates range to almost a million (Ray, 1989b). In West Virginia over one thousand children are being taught at home (D. Fox, personal communication, January, 1989). Increasing numbers of individuals "believe that traditional schooling is neither indispensable to education nor 'right' for every child

(Lines, 1982, p.119).

Along with this resurgence has come an intense debate among educators, parents, legislators, judicial systems, concerned professionals, and the general public over the home school issue. On the one hand parents instinctively feel that the family is the first and basic school and that it is the greatest single educational force providing the most important learning environment (Rushdoony, 1971; Gaebelein, 1964). Research also indicates that parent participation in the educational process has positive effects on children (Henderson, 1981; Rich, 1987; Matuskzek, 1977).

On the other hand though, educators have built up an "aura of sacredness around the public school" (Moore, 1984, p.238). "As we have professionalized and bureaucratized education, . . .the parent has been told that he not only has little role as a teacher, but that his efforts may even be destructive" (Gordon, 1972, p.1). What is a parent to think amidst these mixed messages?

The disparity in viewpoints also extends into the legal aspect of home education. The laws regarding home education vary considerably from state to state (Lines, 1982; Tobak & Zirkel, 1983, 1988; Deckard, 1986). Likewise the courts, reflecting societies' ambivalence, have failed to sound a unified voice on the issue when challenged. In some cases home education is permitted with little concern over its quality or scope. In other cases academic equivalence must

be concretely demonstrated. In still other cases the demand for parity has extended to the point where the courts have refused permission to home school because of concerns over the social development of the children involved (Bumstead, 1979; Nolte, 1982; Ritter, 1979; Zirkel & Gluckman, 1983; Harris & Fields, 1982; Splitt, 1984; Lines, 1983; Sacken, 1988; Zakariza, 1988; Wendel, 1985, 1986; Ray, 1989a; McGee, 1988; Huffman, 1986).

According to the recent Gallup Poll on education (Gallup & Elam, 1988) a majority of the public believes that parents should have the legal right to educate their children at home, but they reject, by about a 2-1 margin, the idea that home schooling is a good thing for the nation.

This general skepticism toward home schooling is fueled in part by a lack of concrete empirical research. It is difficult for those concerned with this issue to make sense of the sporadic news - report, rumor, or relevant article in the popular press. "Misconceptions about home schools are prevalent" (Wright, 1988).

One "interesting and controversial area deals with the affective development of home school children" (Ray, 1986, p.37). The social and emotional status of these relatively isolated children is a serious concern. The public wonders are these children going to be able to function independently in a social environment? Are they developing the interpersonal social skills needed to function in society? How are they feeling about themselves? Is there

an emotional toll being paid by these children for the home school experience?

In West Virginia a judge recently characterized home school environments as places in which parents

> keep their children in medieval ignorance and quarter them in Dickensian squalor beyond the reach of the ameliorating influence of social welfare agencies, and separate their children from organized society in an environment of indoctrination and deprivation so that the children become mindless automatons incapable of coping with life outside their own families. (State v. Riddle, 1981)

In contrast proponents argue that the home is truly "the best educational nest" (Bloom, 1964, p.88), where the child is provided "a rich social experience" allowing for a high degree of social development (Reynolds & Williams, 1985, p.15).

The educational research community is calling for a response to this quandary over the social and emotional status of home school children. Wright (1988) stated that researchers need to broaden the focus of evaluative studies "so that comparisons are not exclusively focused on academic achievement" (p.107).

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Introduction

Today there is a resurgence of interest in home schooling. Estimates of the number of children being educated in homes across the United States range from one hundred thousand to over a million (Lines, 1986; Ray 1989b). The social and emotional status of these relatively isolated children is a primary concern of local and state departments of education, teachers, legislators, sociologists, parents, and the general public. The purpose of this research was to investigate the difference in the social and emotional status of home schooled versus conventionally schooled children. Social and emotional status was measured with the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales' socialization domain, and the Kinetic Drawing System for Family and School.

Literature Review

Proponents and critics of home schooling have hotly debated the home schooling issue in the popular press as well as educational publications. A review of this literature uncovers mostly philosophical commentaries, news articles, anecdotal collections, legal analyses, or critiques of traditional education or the home school. Often divergent viewpoints are expressed on the social and emotional development issue as advocates and critics make a priori appeals to logic (e.g., Solorzano, 1985; Moore & Moore, 1986).

Lately though the home school movement has received

attention from educational researchers. The majority of the research has used self-report surveys or interviews to collect data of a demographic and descriptive nature (e.g., Gustavsen, 1980; Linden, 1983; Kreft, 1986; White, 1987; Kinderman, 1987; Rose, 1985; Mahan & Ware, 1987; Gustafson, 1987; Van Galen, 1986). These studies examined selected characteristics of home school families such as their motivations, values, attitudes, religious orientation, methods, and socio-economic level.

Some of the studies mentioned above have asked parents to detail their child's opportunities for peer contact and to express their opinions on the social and emotional development issue (e.g., Rakestraw, 1988). As a whole, home school parents generally seem satisfied with their children's development in these areas and with the amount of peer contact provided in their home schools. On the basis of 219 surveys in Washington state Wartes (1987) concluded that home school youth are not being socially deprived.

A few studies provide measurement data from tests and other instruments administered to children who are being home schooled. The studies by the Alaska Department of Education (1985), Greene (1984), Wartes (1988a, 1988b, 1988c), Frost (1987, 1988), and Suiter (1989) for example have focused on the academic achievement of home schoolers. These and other studies reveal that the home school is positively influencing academic achievement and perhaps cognitive development (Quine & Marek, 1987; Ray 1986).

An examination for comparative studies in the affective and social domains reveals only two studies. Maarse Delahooke (1986) used a projective instrument, the Roberts Apperception Test for Children, to measure dimensions of personality. She administered the test to a group of 28 home educated children and a comparison group of 32 children in private school, all of whom resided within a 20 mile radius. She found that both groups scored in the "well-adjusted" range of emotional functioning. However, the home educated children appeared to be less peer-oriented than the comparison group. The major weakness of this study is the external validity and interpretation problems inherent in the instrument used (Sines, 1985).

In the other study Taylor (1986) administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale to a random sample of 224 home educated children nationwide. He compared their score to the norm group of 1,183 school children from a public school system in a small town in Pennsylvania. Results indicated that the self-concept of the homeschoolers was significantly higher than that of the conventionally schooled population on all scales. This classic and carefully conducted study failed to use a matched comparison design which is recommended with home school populations (Wright, 1988).

From both of these exploratory studies and also from the surveys previously mentioned it appears "that home school youth are doing at least as well as those in

conventional schools in terms of affective outcomes" (Ray, 1986, p.43). It is apparent though that very limited measured evidence exists regarding the social and emotional status of these relatively isolated children. The educational research community has called for more empirical studies that "resolutely train their focus on the children themselves" (Pitman, 1986, p.19) and that examine the effect of the home school environment on the children's social development (Linden, 1983; Rose, 1985; Griffiths, 1988; Ray, 1988; Lines, 1986; Mahan & Ware, 1987). In such comparative studies care should be taken in the selection of reliable and valid instruments that reveal new facets of social emotional status, and "the home school youth should ideally be compared to a similar group in relation to demographic characteristics" (Wright, 1988, p.107).

Thus the major purposes of the present investigation were threefold; First, to use a valid and reliable instrument to gather parent perspectives on the social sufficiency of their children; Second, to replicate the self-concept work that has been done except to use a quasi-experimental cohort group design; and Thirdly, through the use of child drawings to explore child - family - school interaction patterns looking for emotional indicators. In each of the dimensions of this study home schooled children, those children taught primarily in the home, were compared to conventionally schooled children, those taught primarily in public or private educational institutions.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were examined in this study:

1. There is no significant difference between the social sufficiency of those children who are in home schools and those children in conventional schools in terms of the socialization domain score on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales.
2. The self-concept of those children who are in home schools is not significantly different than the self-concept of those children in conventional schools in terms of the global measure of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.
3. There is no significant difference between the prevalence of emotional indicators in those children who are in home schools and those children in conventional schools as noted in their Kinetic Family and School Drawings.

Method

The research design that was used for this study is a quasi-experimental cohort group comparison.

Population and Sample

Two general populations of West Virginia children were employed for this study. The first population was comprised of all children ages 7 to 14 who are currently home schooling and have been for a minimum of two years. The second population was comprised of all children of similar

ages who are in conventional schools and have been for at least two years.

The sample of home schooling families for the study was a subset of the families on the mailing list of the West Virginia Home Educators Association (WVHEA). Contact was made with the WVHEA in February, 1989, and access was gained to their mailing list containing 530 names. A letter describing the research project, its purpose, and the responsibilities of participants in the study, along with an introductory letter from Don Fox the president of WVHEA and an invitation to participate was mailed to all 530 names. Forty eight families who were willing to cooperate in the study returned an enclosed postcard indicating their desire. Of the 48 families 32 completed the necessary packet of testing instruments and qualified their children as subjects for the study.

The 32 home schooling families that participated in the study were asked to choose a family similar to their own whose children were conventionally schooled and request that they participate in the study. No effort was made to direct their choice of a family except for the statement "similar to your own". Thirty conventional school families returned the completed packet of testing instruments and qualified their children as the control group for the study.

The home school sample was comprised of 17 female and 15 male students whose mean age was 10.4 years. Their parents' average education was at the "associate degree or

two year college degree" level (6.1 on a scale from 1 to 9). The home school families' average income was such that they qualified for "reduced price" lunches (2.1 on a scale from 1 to 3). They represented 19 different counties throughout the state and all geographical areas.

The conventional school sample was comprised of 16 female and 14 male students whose mean age was also 10.4 years. Their parents' average education was at the "some college" level (5.4 on a scale from 1 to 9). The conventional school families' average income, however, was such that they were "not eligible" for lunch subsidies (2.5 on a scale from 1 to 3). Since the home school families represented a diverse cross section of the state it is assumed that their acquaintances, the conventional school families, also did.

Instruments

Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales.

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS, 1985) Classroom Edition was chosen because of its ability to assess whether or not a child has acquired the skills needed to function independently in a social environment, a primary concern of home school critics. Although often considered an assessment tool for handicapped populations, it has been used in research with non-handicapped individuals to assess the effects of various treatments on social sufficiency (Harrison, 1985). For the purposes of this study treatment was defined as education in the home. The socialization

domain of the VABS measures how the individual interacts with others, how the individual plays and uses leisure time, and how the individual demonstrates responsibility and sensitivity to others.

For the purposes of this study a parent acted as the informant since they were exposed to the typical behavior of the subject and were significant members of the child's social environment. Obviously the information obtained from parents will generally reflect their judgment of the appropriateness of the child's social behavior. It is understood that parent ratings can be influenced by demand characteristics, personal biases, expectancies, understanding the behaviors to be rated, response set, and carelessness (Michelson, Sugai, Wood, & Kazdin, 1983). However, since these influences will be manifested in both home and conventional school parents their resultant effect will be minimal.

Interitem consistency on the VABS Classroom Edition has been measured by coefficient alpha. The socialization domain has a coefficient alpha reliability of .94. Factor analyses supply evidence for the validity of the structure of the VABS Classroom Edition. The content validity of the Classroom Edition is supported by the thorough procedures used in the development of the items. Criterion - related validity is supported by moderate correlations between Classroom Edition scores and scores from other adaptive behavior scales (Harrison, 1985).

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

Since one purpose of this study was to replicate the work of Taylor (1986) the second instrument chosen for this study was the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHSCS, 1969). The PHSCS is a "brief, self report measure designed to aid in the assessment of self-concept in children and adolescents" (Piers, 1984, p.1). Self-concept refers to a person's self-perceptions which "are formed primarily through the interaction of the individual with the environment during childhood, and by the attitudes and behaviors of others" (Piers, 1984, p.43). Since interactional influences from significant others (peers, parents, teachers) are different in a home school than a conventional school, Taylor (1986) states that it is "vital to examine the effects of the home school upon the social image of the child as this is reflected in his self-concept" (p. 50).

Taylor (1986) after an extensive evaluation of available instruments found the PHSCS to be sufficiently reliable, to possess adequate stability and internal consistency, to have well supported validity, and to have been widely used in prior research with school age children. Piers (1984) summarizes reliability studies of the PHSCS and notes that test - retest reliability coefficients range from .42 to .96 and internal consistency estimates for the total score range from .88 to .93. Taylor (1986) cites several studies which uphold the multi-dimensionality of the self-

concept construct and factorial validity of the PHSCS. Correlations between the PHSCS total score and other measures of self-concept range from .32 to .85. Correlations between the PHSCS total score and behavior ratings by teachers and peers ranges from -.03 to .54. Thus the PHSCS demonstrates adequate convergent validity.

The PHSCS assumes that "children will reveal important aspects of their underlying self-image by stating whether or not a series of simple, declarative statements hold true for them. . . ." (Piers, 1984, p. 43). Due to this self-report nature of the instrument children often respond in a generally positive fashion. The PHSCS attempts to minimize acquiescence and negative response bias by phrasing approximately half of the items in the direction of higher self-concept and half in a lower self-concept direction.

Kinetic Drawing System.

The third instrument used in this study is the Kinetic Drawing System for Family and School (KDS, 1985). The Kinetic Drawing System is composed of two parts: the Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) and the Kinetic School Drawing (KSD). The KDS has many uses in a clinical setting. For the purposes of this study it was used as a projective technique to assess a child's perceptions of relationships among the child, peers, family, school, and significant others, a primary concern among home school critics. The KFD and KSD directions "give the child permission to pictorially represent the past, current, or future status"

(Knoff & Prout, 1985, p. 53) of the family or school from the child's perspective. The KFD can reveal a child's positive and negative relationships with family members and their self-concept.

Interrater reliability for the KFD as reported by Knoff & Prout (1985) is "high. . . . as long as the scoring criteria are clearly defined and the judges are trained adequately" (p. 55). One study reported median reliability of .87. The test - retest stability of the KFD is unstable (Knoff & Prout, 1985) reflecting its "ability to measure primarily state, as opposed to trait, characteristics" (p. 55). Tests of construct validity using the "known groups" method have yielded varying results. The KFD has discriminated accurately with some populations but not others. Knoff & Prout (1985) concluded that even though the KFD may not be valid for discriminating among "normal" and "clinical" children it may still serve a "useful function by identifying state-oriented personality/behavioral issues that may be significant to the child" (p. 56). This inherent bias toward measuring "state oriented" issues fits well with the purposes of this study. The one concurrent validity study cited in Knoff & Prout (1985) favorably correlated the KFD with the Family Relations Indicator, an instrument used to reveal relationship patterns in the family.

"The KSD's main purpose is to reveal the child's attitudes toward school: the child's academic and other

self-perceptions related to school, the perception of his or her teacher(s), and perceptions of peers and peer relationships" (Knoff & Prout, 1985, p. 60). Prout and Celmer cited in Knoff & Prout (1985) after investigating the criterion-related validity of the KSD concluded that the KSD "does have clinical value and utility, and can help investigate perceptions/feelings toward school and their association with academic achievement" (p. 62). Several other studies, though, offer little validation support for the KSD and this author found no reliability studies.

Since children reveal their underlying attitudes and characteristics through a wide variety of signs in their drawings, a scoring checklist was designed to assist interpretation of the drawings. This checklist was composed of only those signs that have been empirically demonstrated to occur significantly more often, but not exclusively, on the drawings of children with emotional problems. Finding these signs (emotional indicators) in a drawing merely suggests tendencies and possible difficulties and is not indicative of serious emotional problems or pathology. Seventeen emotional indicators used for this study were drawn from Knoff & Prout's (1985) Kinetic Drawing System and another nine emotional indicators were chosen from Koppitz's (1968) Human Figure Drawing System. These 26 indicators reveal: anxiety (7); low self-concept (1); impulsivity (3); anger, aggression (3); insecurity (7); shyness, timidity (2); defensiveness (1); and low academic achievement (2).

In addition to these 26 emotional indicators 5 other indicators that have been empirically demonstrated to reveal higher self-concept or greater academic achievement (Knoff & Prout, 1985) were incorporated into the checklist, bringing the total number of drawing characteristics to be scored to 31.

This checklist of drawing characteristics was demonstrated to have interrater reliability when Stough (1989) conducted a pilot study of its usefulness with a class of 13 graduate students after they had completed a semester course on Children's Drawings. Interrater reliability was .75. Four scorers were chosen from this graduate class to score the 124 drawings in this study.

Procedure

As mentioned earlier 48 home school families responded to the initial invitation to participate in the study. Those 48 families were mailed two identical packets of materials containing: an introductory letter, detailed instruction sheet, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition questionnaire booklet, The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, two 8 1/2" x 11" pieces of plain white paper, and a #2 pencil. Each of the home school families was asked to "choose a family similar to your own who is willing to participate in this research project, with a child ages 7 to 14, enrolled in a public or private school".

The introductory letter briefly described the need for

this research and the specific purposes of the project. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and were promised access to the results of the study.

The detailed instruction sheet which was to be returned asked for the following descriptive information: the schooling environment that the child had been in for the last two years (conventional or home), the subject's birthdate and sex, the highest level of education completed by the father and mother of the subject (nine choices ranged from grade school to graduate degree), and after consulting the reprinted table, the possible eligibility based on family size and income for a lunch subsidy as would be available in any public school in the state (eligibility levels: free, reduced, not eligible).

After completing the descriptive information the parent was asked to give the child the #2 pencil and one piece of white paper and to read the standard KFD directions to the child (Knoff & Prout, 1985). After the child completed the KFD the parent was asked to label the people in the drawing by indicating their position in the family and also to list on the back the positions of family members not included in the child's drawing, if any.

Next the child was asked to take the other sheet of paper and the parent was instructed to read the standard KSD directions to the child (Knoff & Prout, 1985). After the child completed the KSD the parent was asked to label the positions of the figures in the drawing, such as: teacher,

brother, sister, friend, etc.

Then the parent was asked to read to the child the pre-printed directions on the front of The Way I Feel About Myself scale (PHSCS). The child was asked to respond to the eighty-item checklist of simple declarative statements. For children with a reading level below third grade the parent could read the statements.

While the child was occupied with drawing or responding to the PHSCS the parent was asked to complete the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition using the printed directions to teachers.

The drawings, completed PHSCS, completed VABS, and instruction sheet with descriptive information was to be returned in the postage paid envelope enclosed. Thirty-two home school families and thirty conventional school families returned complete testing materials.

Data Analysis

The descriptive information obtained on the instruction sheet was analyzed. The mean ages and male - female proportions were calculated for the two groups of subjects. Also the average educational level of the parents and their average eligibility for reduced lunch was obtained.

The VABS Classroom Edition asked informants (parents) to respond to 244 items. The primary emphasis of the questionnaire is on whether or not a given activity is usually or habitually performed (scored 2). If not, is it sometimes or partially performed (scored 1), or not at all

(scored 0)? Although parents responded to all 244 items in the four domains: communication, daily living skills, socialization, and motor skills; only the raw score from the socialization domain was used for this study. Mean raw scores for the two groups involved in the study were calculated and compared using a t-test.

The PHSCS asked children to respond to 80 declarative statements. Items are scored in the direction of positive self-concept so that the higher the raw score, the more positive the child's assessed self-concept. Piers (1985) noted that the total score is the single most reliable measure on the PHSCS. Therefore total scores were calculated, means for the two groups were obtained, and compared using a t-test.

After the KFD and KSD were scored by the four trained graduate students, the total number of positive characteristics found on both was subtracted from the total number of negative characteristics found on both. The resulting number was considered the raw score. Thus, the higher the raw score the more negative characteristics were present. Raw score means for the two groups in this study were calculated and compared using a t-test.

Results

Hypothesis 1

The first null hypothesis stated: There is no significant difference between the social sufficiency of those children who are in home schools and those children in

conventional schools in terms of the socialization domain score on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition.

The home school sample mean was 88.44 with a standard deviation of 9.89. The conventional school sample mean was 86.90 with a standard deviation of 13.18. There is no significant difference between the means of the two groups. The null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 2

The second null hypothesis stated: The self-concept of those children who are in home schools is not significantly different than the self concept of those children in conventional schools in terms of the global measure of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

The home school sample mean was 66.06 with a standard deviation of 10.03. The conventional school sample mean was 65.27 with a standard deviation of 10.88. There is no significant difference between the means of the two groups. The null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 3

The third null hypothesis stated: There is no significant difference between the prevalence of emotional indicators in those children who are in home schools and those children in conventional schools as noted in their Kinetic Family and School Drawings.

The mean number of emotional indicators found in the drawings of the home school sample was 9.31 with a standard

deviation of 3.84. The mean number of emotional indicators found in the drawings of the conventional school sample was 8.23 with a standard deviation of 3.42. There is no significant difference between the means of the two groups. The null hypothesis is retained.

Discussion

It was hypothesized that the social and emotional status of the sample of home educated children would not differ significantly from the social and emotional status of the conventionally schooled sample. Three instruments were chosen to investigate this assumption. After examining the results from these three measures it is concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Subsequent analysis of the predictor values using a General Linear Model (GLM) procedure failed to provide evidence that the type of school significantly contributed to the values of the dependent variables.

Critics of home education argue that home schooled children will not have the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to function independently in a social environment (Shannon, 1979). They stereotype home schoolers as shy, passive, and lethargic because of their isolation from the normal socialization processes found in the conventional school (State v. Riddle, 1981).

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition was the instrument chosen to lend clarity to these issues. The results revealed that there was no statistically

significant difference in the social sufficiency of the two samples as disclosed by parental observations of specific social behaviors. According to the parental observations on the VABS, home schooled children's interpersonal relationships are as normal as those of conventionally schooled children; they are using their play and leisure time in similar ways; and they are demonstrating responsibility and sensitivity to others as often as conventionally schooled children.

Therefore, one can infer that within the educating home there appears to exist an environmental press which fosters social development and simultaneously provides a set of experiences which gives the child the needed competencies, and attitudes for success in society. Most of the survey studies that have been conducted agree that home educated children are not being socially deprived (e.g. Wartes, 1987). This study, however, discovered that the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to function in society are also being acquired by home educated children at a rate similar to that of conventionally schooled children.

Since the social milieu in a home school is substantially different from that in a conventional school and since a difference in interactional influences may have a powerful bearing upon a child's self-evaluation (Rosenberg, 1965), critics of home education claim that the self-concept of home schooled children will suffer.

The results from the Piers-Harris Children's Self-

Concept Scale, however, reveal that the self-concept of home schooled children is not significantly different from that of conventionally schooled children. This conclusion which was obtained with the use of a quasi-experimental cohort design differs from that of Taylor (1986). Taylor found a significantly superior self-concept in his home educated sample, but he failed to take into account the recommendation of Piers (1984). Piers underscored the "importance of developing local norms for interpretation, particularly when the scale [PHSCS] is used with children who differ in important respects from those in the normative sample" (p.50). It is clear from descriptive and demographic studies, including Taylor (1986), that home school families do differ in important respects. Notably, they have higher income and education levels. When these variables are controlled for with the use of a quasi-experimental cohort design, as was done in this study, one can conclude that the self-concept of home educated children does not differ from that of conventionally schooled children.

Nevertheless this study supports Taylor's (1986) assertion that "insofar as self-concept is a reflector of socialization, it would appear that few home schooling children are socially deprived" (p.17). In fact it appears that the experiences in the home school and the support from the parent-teacher are contributing to build a high level of self-worth in the home school students. The mean global

scale score was 84th percentile. One can infer that if the home educated child is missing out on self-concept building experiences by not attending conventional schools, he or she is being compensated by comparable experiences in the home.

Critics of home education wonder if there is an emotional toll being paid by these children for the home school experience. They assume the home schooled child must be carrying a burden of emotional strain being with the oppressive parent so much of the time, accompanied by feelings of loneliness and exclusion from the peer group (Fanzosa, 1984). The Kinetic Family Drawing System did reveal that there were "state oriented" emotional issues in the home school sample. However, the number of emotional indicators in the home school sample did not differ significantly from the number of emotional indicators in the conventional school sample. There is some anxiety, anger, insecurity, timidity, impulsivity, and defensiveness in home school children, but these attitudes and characteristics are also present to a similar degree in conventionally schooled children.

All three dimensions of this study reveal that home educated children are doing as well as their conventionally schooled cohorts. The concerns expressed by teachers, parents, legislators, and administrators over these issues are unfounded. Critics should not argue self-concept, socialization, or emotional-harm rationales. Home education does not adversely influence a child's affective development

and may contribute to such development.

Limitations and Recommendations

The social sufficiency, self-concept, and child-family-school interaction instruments used only reveal certain aspects of social and emotional status.

Since this research relied on the use of voluntary sample groups it is difficult to be sure that those who participated are representative of those who chose not to participate. As Wartes (1988b) clearly points out, there may be two groups of home school families: those that are "functional, caring people" (p.19), who participate in research projects such as this and those that are "less functional and not acting in their children's best interest" (p.19) who do not participate.

Research that empirically delineates the characteristics of home schooled children is in its infant stages. Many facets of the social and emotional status of these children remain to be studied. Studies could examine prosocial behavior, moral development, conformity to societal norms, and methods of conflict resolution of home schooled children. A nationwide self-concept study using a cohort design would be worthwhile. Longitudinal studies could follow social and emotional variables.

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